



## UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 8

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February 29, 2000

Donald A. Falvey, Superintendent  
Zion National Park  
Springdale, UT 84767-1099

### VIA FAX AND MAIL

Subject: Comments on the Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (Visitor Management and Resource Protection Plan) (DEIS)

Dear Mr. Falvey:

EPA appreciates the opportunity to submit its comments on the above referenced project. Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA) directs EPA to review and publicly comment on environmental impacts of a major federal action. In addition, EPA is directed to determine whether environmental impacts associated with the action are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA's rating of this DEIS is LO (Lack of Objections). Lack of Objections - The review has not identified potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the preferred alternative.

EPA believes that the National Park Service (NPS) has provided a preferred alternative that offers several opportunities for park resource preservation and an increase in protection of the park's environmental resources. In relation to the current plan, the proposed plan offers several improvements:

- Further limitation of backcountry group size in pristine zones and primitive zones.
- Place limitation on total number of parties allowed in the pristine and primitive zones.
- Reduction of visitor numbers on trails and routes.
- Increase the proposed park acres of wilderness.
- Recommend five drainages and their tributaries as eligible and suitable for addition to the national wild and scenic river system.
- Include some BLM lands for transfer to park.
- Sections of North Fork of the Virgin River restored.

EPA has contacted Park officials about the status of instream flows. The Park believes that the current water agreement provides the basis for meeting instream flows. EPA suggests that the final EIS provide more detailed explanation about the instream flows, so the general public can understand the basis for this belief about instream flow sufficiency.

If NPS has any questions or needs clarification on our comments, please contact Jim Berkley at (303) 312-7102.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Cody, Chief  
NEPA Unit  
Ecosystems Protection Program



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